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# Fire on the Water: China, America, and the Future of the Pacific, by Robert Haddick

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about committing forces to LAM SON 719, and in 2014, when ISIS seized Fallujah, Maliki allowed the problem to fester. In neither case was suppression of a hostile insurgency put above the objective of maintaining a grip on power—much to the frustration of Washington. As Henry Kissinger would later say of LAM SON 719, it was an “operation [that was] conceived in ambivalence and assailed by skepticism, [and] proceeded in confusion.” Today what was then the town of Tchepone lies abandoned, though the lessons of 1971 remain fresh. Sander’s work will likely remain the definitive record of the Laos campaign until such time as archives in Hanoi are made fully available.

JOSEPH HAMMOND



Haddick, Robert. *Fire on the Water: China, America, and the Future of the Pacific*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2014. 288pp. \$37.95

Robert Haddick proposes a revised U.S. strategy toward China. He argues—agreeing with recent U.S. national security strategies—that continued U.S. forward presence is the only option that supports the American objectives of “an open international economic system; respect for universal values around the world; and a rules-based international order that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation.” He articulates a two-front effort to ensure China rises within the existing international structure: positive reinforcement of good behavior combined with significant defense reforms to allow punishment of bad behavior.

Haddick discusses the nature of China’s military modernization and how it

bodes ill for the U.S. ability to punish Chinese transgressions against international order. He believes that current U.S. force posture is inadequate because U.S. air and naval capabilities are vulnerable to Chinese land-, air-, and sea-launched cruise missiles and ballistic missiles. And future U.S. capabilities—the F-35 in particular—have insufficient range to operate from existing bases under the antiaccess umbrella created by these weapons. To counter the tactical and operational challenges these weapons create he advocates the Pentagon develop a new long-range bomber and long-range cruise missiles able to penetrate Chinese airspace and hold critical targets at risk. He also promotes autonomous aerial projectiles based on a 1990s DARPA model to locate and destroy road-mobile missile launchers. He argues convincingly that his acquisition proposals solve the likely tactical and operational problems of a future war with China, but he does not engage with the highly contested literature on the strategic effectiveness of airpower. Without a theory of strategic effectiveness, he fails to make the case that these new capabilities would support his strategy and influence Chinese decision making during crisis or war.

Additional proposals are designed to threaten presumed Chinese fears. These include encouraging America’s regional allies to develop their own antiaccess capabilities on the First Island Chain, improving U.S. Navy blockading capacity, developing irregular warfare capacity among China’s minority populations, and developing antisatellite weaponry.

However, if China continues its policy of “salami slicing,” these weapons and plans will never see battle. By incrementally challenging the existing regional order,

China is, as Haddick agrees, achieving its objectives without risking war. Beijing understands there is a threshold for U.S. military response and will continue to operate below it. An American president would be loath to fire the first shots over the Chinese occupation of an uninhabited island. Haddick therefore argues the United States should develop policies to encourage China to follow the existing international rules in letter and spirit. Unfortunately, he does not detail these policies, leaving his strategy wanting.

Haddick states that strategy is about managing risk. While much of what Haddick proposes seems commonsensical, it is unfinished, and this poses risks. Focusing only on punitive measures against possible Chinese actions runs the risk of ignoring the ways China has played by the rules while furthering a mind-set where every development in the PLA's modernization is perceived as a threat to U.S. regional interests—regardless of Chinese intentions. This book should be read as part of an ongoing and equally unfinished debate on how to handle a rising China.

IAN T. SUNDSTROM



Hughes, Wayne P., ed. *The U.S. Naval Institute on Naval Tactics*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2015. 192pp. \$21.95

*The U.S. Naval Institute on Naval Tactics* is a collection of thirteen essays assembled by Captain Wayne Hughes, USN (Ret.)—author of several books, most notably *Fleet Tactics and Coastal Combat* and *Military Modeling for Decision Making*. Captain Hughes is also an accomplished naval officer, having served as commanding officer of USS

*Hummingbird* (MSC 192) and USS *Morton* (DD 948). Notable authors appearing in *On Tactics* include Admiral Woodward, RN, who commanded British forces in the Falklands War, and Giuseppe Fioravanzo, Admiral of the Fleet, Italian Navy. *On Tactics* is part of the U.S. Naval Institute's new Wheel Books series, which is a collection of books containing some of the Naval Institute's most well-regarded articles from *Proceedings*—and other sources—on such topics as naval leadership, command, strategy, and cooperation.

*On Tactics* is well worth the reader's time, and appropriate for both junior and senior officers. It benefits greatly from Hughes's insightful commentary and tactful editing, which boils the combined length of the selected essays down to a manageable 190 pages. Although the topic of tactics is broadly applicable to all naval communities, surface warfare officers will probably have the easiest time relating to the selected essays.

Of the thirteen essays in the volume, a favorite was "Missile Chess: A Parable," written by Hughes himself. "Missile Chess" describes a game created by Hughes in which players sit down to play a traditional game of chess but with a major twist: the players have a fixed number of "missiles" that they must distribute among their pieces as they see fit. The pieces still move according to the rules of regular chess, but each time they capture an opposing piece they expend one "missile." Once a piece's missile inventory is depleted a piece can still move but can no longer capture. After he walks us through several hypothetical scenarios, it is clear that despite its simplicity, missile chess nicely elucidates some of the most vexing operational challenges with which a modern naval commander must contend.